

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

What is claimed:

1. [TWICE AMENDED] A method for operating a radio station, comprising:
periodically receiving generic content files via a satellite downlink or an internet connection;
periodically creating locally generated content files;
storing all of the received generic and locally generated content files; and
using an electronic schedule having at least one or more indicators when certain of the generic content files are to be played and one or more indicators when there is supposed to be a break;
preselecting which, if any, of the locally generated content files will be played during a given break without regard for the length or amount of the locally generated content files;
retrieving, playing and broadcasting at least some of the stored generic content files in accordance with ~~an~~ the electronic schedule until a break indicator appears at which time the preselected locally generated content files, if any, for that break are retrieved, played and broadcast until completed;
seamlessly resuming retrieving, playing and broadcasting at least some of the stored generic content files without the need for resynchronization with the electronic schedule or dynamically resizing the content files; and
repeating the process.

~~without syncing the playback and broadcast of the at least some of the stored content files to a real-time network.~~

2. [TWICE AMENDED] The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic schedule is at least partly derived from a network schedule that is provided to the radio station via the satellite downlink or an internet connection.

3. [AMENDED] The method of claim 1, wherein ~~the electronic schedule is at least partly derived from a network schedule that is provided to the radio station via an internet connection.~~
the certain ones of the generic content files that are played in response to an indicator in the electronic schedule are specific to that radio station.

4. [TWICE AMENDED] A method for operating a radio station network, comprising:
periodically ~~receiving~~ sending generic content files via a satellite downlink or an internet connection to affiliate radio stations;

~~storing the received content files; and~~ each affiliate radio station storing the generic content files and storing locally generated content files;

generating and sending an electronic schedule having at least one or more indicators when there is supposed to be a break to each affiliate radio station;~~by merging i) a network schedule received from a content provider, and ii) a local schedule maintained at the radio station; and~~

each of the affiliate radio stations preselecting which, if any, of the locally generated content files will be played during a given break without regard for the length or amount of the locally generated content files;

each of the affiliate radio stations retrieving, playing and broadcasting at least some of the stored generic content files in accordance with the electronic schedule until a break indicator appears at which time the preselected locally generated content files, if any, for that break are retrieved, played and broadcast until completed,

each of the affiliate radio stations seamlessly resuming retrieving, playing and broadcasting at least some of the stored generic content files without the need for resynchronization or dynamic resizing, and repeating the process.

5. [ORIGINAL]: The method of claim 4, wherein said ~~network schedule and local schedule are merged once an hour to generate~~ the electronic schedule is regenerated after a predetermined period of time for the next hour.

Claims 6-9 are being cancelled.

10. [FIRST AMENDED] The method of claim 9 4, wherein different electronic schedules are provided by the network to the affiliate radio stations, each electronic schedule corresponding ~~to each of a number of different~~ a corresponding radio broadcast formats.

11. [FIRST AMENDED] The method of claim 9 10, further comprising associating each generic content file with a placeholder to identify the placement of the generic content file in the

electronic schedule; and wherein the electronic schedules provided sent to at least two of the affiliate radio stations having the same radio broadcast format each reference the same placeholders; different a given content file indicator;

the method further comprising:

recording at least two different content files for the a given placeholder such that the affiliate radio stations having the same radio format may play a different generic content file periodically for the same placeholder content file indicator, and associating each of the different content files with a different token; and

in response to said different tokens, said satellite-based content delivery system providing a different content file to each of the at least two affiliate radio stations.

12. [TWICE AMENDED] A radio network, comprising:

a plurality of affiliate radio stations:

a plurality of programming formats, each radio station preselecting which format it will use for its programming;

a generic electronic schedule for all radio stations playing the same format; the electronic schedule having one or more indicators when there is supposed to be a break;

a plurality of content files provided by the radio network capable of being downloaded by each of the affiliate radio stations, the content files being either localized for particular radio stations or generic for all radio stations playing the same format or a combination of both, the generic content files being capable of being downloaded and stored at any time without regard for scheduling;

a content provider, linked to the plurality of affiliate radio stations via a satellite-based content delivery system, providing the plurality of content files to each of the affiliate radio stations ~~in the form of discrete content files~~ and providing each of the affiliate radio stations with an the generic electronic schedule that instructs an automation system of the affiliate radio ~~stating to retrieve, play and broadcast ones of the content files, thereby generating a near real-time radio broadcast, the electronic schedule specifying breaks that may be dynamically resized or filled in different ways, based on each affiliate radio stations available content to fill the~~ breaks.

each radio station having a first automation system which downloads the content files from the content provider applicable to the chosen format and stores them locally, the first automation system sequentially retrieving, playing and broadcasting least some of the plurality of content files in accordance with the electronic schedule;

wherein when the indicator for a break appears in the electronic schedule, each radio station may specify either that none or a preselected individualized amount and time length of locally generated content files shall be retrieved, played and broadcast; such that the first automation system stops sequentially executing the network originated generic content files and causes the locally originated content files of any time length or number which have been preselected by each station to be played during a particular break until they are completed; and

wherein at the completion of the playback of the locally generated content files during a given break, the first automation system seamlessly resumes retrieving, playing and broadcasting the generic content files without the need for resynchronization or dynamic resizing.

13. [FIRST AMENDED] The radio network of claim 12, wherein the content provider uses a one-way link of the satellite-based content delivery system to transfer content files to ~~ones~~ of the affiliate radio stations.

14. [FIRST AMENDED] The radio network of claim 12 ~~13~~, wherein the content provider is further linked to the plurality of affiliate radio stations via a bidirectional internet return link that provides a backup connection for transferring content files to ~~ones of~~ the affiliate radio stations.

15. [ORIGINAL] The radio network of claim 12, wherein the content provider comprises:

an origination component providing operators of the content provider an interface to record and manage content files that are to be transmitted to the affiliate radio stations; and

a distribution component to deliver said content files via the satellite-based content delivery system.

16. [ORIGINAL] The radio network of claim 15, wherein the content provider further comprises an encapsulation component to encapsulate said content files prior to their distribution by the distribution component.

17. [ORIGINAL] The radio network of claim 12, wherein the content provider provides content to different ones of the affiliate radio stations using only a single satellite channel of the satellite-based content delivery system.

Claims 18-22 were previously cancelled and Claims 23-24 are being canceled.

25. [NEW] A radio network, comprising:

a plurality of affiliate radio stations:

a plurality of programming formats, each radio station preselecting which format it will use for its programming;

a generic electronic schedule for all radio stations playing the same format; the electronic schedule having one or more indicators when there is supposed to be a break;

a plurality of content files provided by the radio network capable of being downloaded by each of the affiliate radio stations, the content files being either localized for particular radio stations or generic for all radio stations playing the same format or a combination of both, the generic content files being capable of being downloaded and stored at any time without regard for scheduling;

a content provider, linked to the plurality of affiliate radio stations via a satellite-based content delivery system, providing the plurality of content files to each of the affiliate radio stations and providing each of the affiliate radio stations with the generic electronic schedule; each radio station having a first automation system which downloads the content files from the content provider applicable to the chosen format and stores them locally, the first automation system sequentially retrieving, playing and broadcasting least some of the plurality of content files in accordance with the electronic schedule;

each radio station having a second automation system for separately storing locally originated content; wherein each radio station may specify either that none or a preselected

individualized amount and time length of locally generated content files shall be retrieved, played and broadcast during a given break such that when the indicator for a break appears in the electronic schedule, the first automation system stops sequentially executing the network originated generic content files and causes the locally originated content files of any time length or number which have been preselected by each station to be played during a particular break until they are completed; and

wherein at the completion of the playback of the locally generated content files during a given break, the first automation system seamlessly resumes retrieving, playing and broadcasting the generic content files without the need for resynchronization or dynamic resizing.

26. [NEW] The radio network of claim 12, further comprising a second automation system for separately storing locally originated content; wherein the first automation system stops sequentially executing the network originated content files and either tells the second automation system to begin playing the locally originated content files of any time length or number which have been preselected by each station, wherein the second automation system sequentially plays the locally generated content until it is completed.

27. [NEW] The radio network of Claim 12, wherein the electronic schedule further comprises a plurality of placeholders associated with one or more of the generic content files; and wherein each of the electronic schedules provided to at least two of the affiliate stations having the same radio broadcast format each reference the same placeholders but may play a different content file periodically for the same placeholder.

28. [NEW] The radio network of Claim 12, wherein the electronic schedule further comprises a plurality of placeholders associated with one or more of the generic content files; and wherein each of the electronic schedules provided to at least two of the affiliate stations having a different same radio broadcast format each reference the same placeholders but will play a different content file for the same placeholder.

29. [NEW] The radio network of Claim 12, wherein the generic content files comprise localized generic and non-localized generic files, some of which are played in accordance with indicators placed in the electronic schedule.